Irwin, Anne. *Redeployment as a Rite of Passage*. Calgary: Canadian Defence & Foreign Affairs Institute, 2008.

-Does she answer the question “How to re-integrate soldiers into society?”

-if yes, how?

-if no, what type of research could be done to answer it

Rites of passage are rituals that serve to mark the transition of individuals from one social

status to another. In the case of redeployment, the shift in status is from deployed soldier to

combat veteran. Typically, rites of passage have three phases: separation, liminality and

reintegration. These phases during redeployment would consist of: leaving the theatre of

operations as the separation phase; the decompression tour in Cyprus as the liminal phase;

and the return trip to Canada as the phase of reintegration.

-Executive Summary page

The first phase of any rite of passage consists of a “rite of separation” during which participants are removed from their original status in society.

-pp. 1

The second phase of the rite of passage is the “liminal period,” from the Latin *limen* for

“threshold.”

-pp. 2

The liminal phase is also a phase during which much deep learning can occur, and in which shared experience contributes to the creation of a new social identity.

-pp. 2

The third phase of the rite of passage is the “rite of reintegration” or “rite of reaggregation,”

during which neophytes are returned to society in their new statuses.

-pp. 2

I spent three months (May to August) of 2006 “embedded” with the soldiers of Charlie

Company of the First Battalion of the Princess Patricia’s Canadian Light Infantry (PPCLI)

while they were deployed as part of Task Force Orion.

-pp. 2

The policy of a TLD for soldiers returning from stressful deployments was first instituted at

the urging of then Lieutenant Colonel Pat Stogran10 who had commanded the 3rd Battalion

of the PPCLI in Afghanistan during Operation Apollo in 2002.

-pp. 3

The meeting with families was very poignant; there were many tears of joy and relief as

families greeted them. Some soldiers asked their families not to meet them at the LTF

because they preferred their reunion to occur in private, fearing that either their families or

they themselves would break down. There were also, however, a few soldiers who were not

met by anyone, not by choice, but because their wives had left them during the tour. All of

the soldiers were changed irrevocably by the tour. Many of them had lost significant amounts

of muscle mass, some as much as thirty or more pounds. Others were coming back with

scars, both physical and psychological, visible and invisible. Some, despite being warned not

to, had received tattoos or body piercings in Cyprus. P. 10

There was one briefing identified as a critical incident stress debriefing which I attended,

along with most of the soldiers who had served with 8 Platoon of Charlie Company.17 There

were approximately 25 people attending this briefing, which was a larger number than

expected by the facilitator, and the room was very crowded. Participants sat in a circle on

chairs and were invited by the facilitator to talk in turn about any incidents that they had

participated in that they considered to have been stressful. All the participants were selfselected,

so there were personnel of ranks ranging from Private to Warrant Officer in the

same room as well as soldiers from other units who had spent the entire tour in Kandahar Air

Field.18 They had also had very different experiences of the tour, some of which were

distressing enough to reduce the facilitator to tears while she listened to them. There was

time only for two rounds of talk, with some participants choosing not to talk at all, and others

speaking openly about their experiences. The briefing, however, was cut short because of

the large number of participants, and before there was any opportunity to achieve closure or

finality, soldiers were told to get on the buses because of the tight timings.

Both immediately after the critical incident stress debriefing and retrospectively, many

soldiers felt it was worse than useless. Some of the soldiers were upset by the debriefing

because they left it feeling raw and open. Some of them expressed a feeling of betrayal: of

having been invited to open up, and then sent on their way without any resolution. Several

soldiers commented that there should not be a mix of ranks in such a debrief, p. 9